

The United States and the Man Disabled in War

By F. PARKER STOCKBRIDGE.

THE general pension appropriation bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1919, authorizes the expenditure for pensions of \$220,000,000. This is \$12,000,000 more than the largest previous pension appropriation in the history of the Government. This appropriation, moreover, carries nothing for the benefit of soldiers who fought in the war against Germany or their dependents. It is entirely and exclusively for the benefit of soldiers of the civil war and their families and relatives, with a trifling proportion for the benefit of veterans or widows of veterans of the Mexican war and the war with Spain. In 1881 President Garfield stated that when the pension roll reached the maximum of \$27,000,000 it would recede and that would be the highest crest of the wave. Nearly forty years have passed since the death of President Garfield and each succeeding year has witnessed an increase in the total of pension appropriations; each year, moreover, the advocates of the increase have announced that the crest of the wave had been reached and that thereafter pension appropriations must of necessity be less. From 1866 to 1917 the United States has expended in pensions \$5,119,000,000.

II.

In the light of this record, as set forth in *The Redemption of the Disabled*, by Garrard Harris of the Research Division of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, the possible pension roll of the United States fifty years from now may easily reach the total of a billion dollars a year. As the pension law now stands, every soldier who served for ninety days in the civil war is entitled to \$30 a month pension, regardless of any question of his dependency or disability; every widow of a soldier who served in the civil war is entitled to a pension, provided she married the soldier at any time prior to 1905. With four times as many men in the United States Army during the war with Germany as there were in the civil war, it is a simple problem of mathematics to determine the possibility

of a pension roll four times as great when the European war shall have receded into the background of history as far as the civil war is now.

Nothing that statesmen and legislators of the present generation can do will bind the Congresses of the future, but by removing in the beginning the chief argument for unlimited pensions, that of the inability of the soldier who has been wounded in his country's service to support himself and his family, the measures adopted by the United States at the beginning of the war just ended are designed to discourage the prodigality and waste that have characterized so much of our pension legislation in the past. This programme, as embodied in the War Risk Insurance act and the vocational rehabilitation act, insures, first, to every soldier in any way disabled through wounds or disease incurred in the war continuing compensation based upon the character of his injuries and his pay as a soldier, and at the same time provides that in the case of disability impairing the man's earning power in his former occupation he shall be given the opportunity to learn at the expense of the Government a trade or profession at which he can support himself at least as well as would have been the case had he not been disabled in the service of his country. As the whole present pension system arose from the perfectly legitimate and humane desire to alleviate the economic condition of those whose disabilities incurred in war had impaired their earning powers, the principal motive for general pension legislation is removed by the terms of these laws already in effect.

Mr. Harris's book deals exhaustively with these underlying principles, upon which the rehabilitation programme now being carried out by the Federal Board for Vocational Education is based. It is the first clear and explicit exposition for the general reader of the whole theory as well as the actual practice being pursued. Accepting in its entirety the prin-

ciple that the best service society can render the man who has suffered disability in its service is not to support him in idleness but to prove to him that no matter how great his disability it is still possible for him to become a self-supporting citizen, able to compete with the physically sound in some lucrative occupation, the Government is pledged to furnish the facilities and the opportunity for the utmost possible limit of his physical restoration and his most complete and practical reeducation to a new trade or vocation. His placement in a position where he can then profitably exercise his newly acquired or reacquired abilities necessarily follows, and this entire task of physical rehabilitation, vocational reeducation and placement has been delegated to the Board for Vocational Education.

III.

This work is already well under way. Some thousands of American veterans of the great war are already being restored to usefulness and being taught, by methods which are based upon the successful experience of the European Allies, how to earn a living in spite of the handicaps imposed by their war injuries.

The range of disabilities extends all the way from deafness to almost complete dismemberment. There seems to be no limit to the physical handicaps that can be successfully overcome once the victim is convinced in his own mind that he can overcome them and proper facilities are provided for his physical restoration and vocational training. Only a very minute percentage of disabled soldiers and sailors can properly be regarded as hopeless cases, totally incapable of becoming self-supporting. Nearly all that has been written on the subject of the rehabilitation of the disabled soldier has dealt with those physically maimed by the loss of limbs, or with the blind. Mr. Harris's book brings statistics down to February 1, 1919: at that date it seemed to be

doubtful whether the number of American soldiers rendered totally blind in the war would be as many as 100. Of totally and partially blind the number is not expected to reach 200. Up to the middle of January there had been reported less than 100 men suffering from defects of hearing and speech. Not more than 3,000 soldiers and sailors in all have suffered amputations of any of their limbs; of these approximately 1,100 have been returned from overseas and were under treatment when this book was written.

Disability in forms not involving dismemberment or the loss of sight or hearing is a much more important problem. More than 5,000 soldiers are under restorative treatment for tuberculosis acquired in the line of duty. Large numbers suffered injuries through wounds and disease resulting in the stiffening of joints, impairment of their powers of endurance, nervous affections of various kinds and other forms of disability that made it impossible for them to resume their former vocations and necessitating the learning of new occupations. These men, whose disabilities are not obvious to the casual observer but which are nevertheless serious, constitute by far the largest proportion of those who but for the reeducation provided for under the vocational rehabilitation act would always be in imminent danger of becoming dependents upon the community.

IV.

Mr. Harris has told the whole story of the Government's plans and purposes, not only as relates to the disabled soldier or sailor but as to the extension of the work of vocational rehabilitation to the victims of industrial accidents and disease. The book is the first of a series dealing with problems of war and reconstruction edited by Francis G. Wickware. If the remaining volumes deal with their respective subjects as thoroughly and at the same time interestingly as *The Redemption of the Disabled* deals with its subject matter these books will prove a valuable contribution to the literature of present day economics and of vital service in the effort of solving the manifold new problems confronting the American people.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE DISABLED. BY GARRARD HARRIS. D. Appleton & Co. \$2.

Wartime Celebrities

By W. B. McCORMICK.

IN her volume called *Fighters for Peace* Mary R. Parkman has gathered together an even dozen of biographical sketches of the King of Belgium, Marshals Joffre and Foch, Premiers Lloyd George and Clemenceau, the King of Italy, President Wilson, Admiral Beatty, Gens. Maude, Allenby and Pershing, and Gynemer, the famous French military aviator. Although no one would pretend there is anything original to be said of these warriors in the cause of peace at this late day, the writer of these sketches has done her work well except in the instances of the sketches of Victor Emmanuel and President Wilson. Mrs. Parkman knows how important the beginnings of a man's life are in forming his character, and in most of these sketches she gives us glimpses of the boy who became the distinguished man of to-day. Her picture of the boyhood of Gynemer (missing in most of the biographies) is not only charmingly written, but allows us to see why the gallant air fighter gave his life as he did for his country. The sketches of Lloyd George and Clemenceau are also particularly admirable in this respect. The book is illustrated with photographs of each of the twelve fighters for peace included in the text.

Uncensored Celebrities is the meaningless title of a collection of superficial studies of persons prominent in the British political world written by E. T. Raymond. Mr. Raymond's style is what British critics call "journalistic" and his interest in fact is not at all profound, a case in point

being found at the end of his sketch of Sir F. E. Smith (now Lord Birkenhead and Lord High Chancellor). He writes of Sir Frederick's return from "a propagandizing tour" in the United States "in circumstances of some mystery." In view of Sir Frederick's tactless speech at a Bar Association meeting in this city and his further indiscretion in Canada at a dinner party there does not seem to be much of a mystery as to his recall. Mr. Raymond says of Sir Edward Carson's Ulster rebellion movement, "Potsdam betted heavily on Carsonism. . . . Potsdam may have been wrong. But some part of the readiness with which Germany accepted a great risk was undoubtedly due to the conviction that the schism was real and serious, that it affected the discipline of the British army, and would probably paralyze British diplomacy."

For the most part these sketches appeared in the English periodical *Everyman*. Great names fill the title pages and beyond; such as Mr. Asquith, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Winston Churchill, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Earl Curzon. We know little of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb and we learned not enough more about them to pursue the subject. We were very much interested to observe that directly after Lord Buckmaster of Cheltenham comes the name of Samuel Gompers, a good American who happens to have been born in London, which possibly makes him a British celebrity. If the writer had not tried so desperately to be "smart" this might have been an amusing book.

FIGHTERS FOR PEACE. BY MARY R. PARKMAN. The Century Company. \$1.50. UNCENSORED CELEBRITIES. BY E. T. RAYMOND. Henry Holt & Co. \$2.50.

"By Thomas W. and Mary E. Hanshew" on the title page of *The Riddle of the Purple Emperor* means that Mrs. Hanshew wrote the story from an outline found in the great mass of notes, plots, outlines and suggestions left by her husband at his death. It was long contended that Thomas W. Hanshew was "Bertha M. Clay" of the so popular fiction. Mrs. Hanshew says that after the death of Charlotte M. Braeme (who wrote as "Bertha M. Clay") Mr. Hanshew, among others, wrote novels which were published with "Bertha M. Clay" on the title page. Which, says Mrs. Hanshew, is the truth and the whole truth.



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